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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 13, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM COLE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for 5 minutes.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED FOR REPUBLICANS AND THEIR SPECIAL INTERESTS

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of weeks, President Bush has attempted to turn attention away from his dismal domestic record by scaring Americans into believing his administration is the only administration that can keep them safe and by proposing a litany of new domestic programs without any specifics on what they entail and how he would pay for them.

The President hopes Americans forgot 9/11 happened on his watch, that he

and his administration refused to listen to his own terrorism expert, Richard Clarke, who warned that the possibility of a terrorist attack needed to be taken seriously. President Bush also hopes Americans forgot that it took him several months to back the Department of Homeland Security, time that could have been better used securing our ports and borders. And now, after more than a month of saying he would not support giving complete budgetary authority to a newly created intelligence director, the President is now moving closer to that 9/11 Commission recommendation. But closer is not good enough. Time is of the essence and the President continues to sidestep these critical homeland security issues. His latest proposal only gives the new director control over 70 percent of our Nation's intelligence budget.

Of course, the Republican leadership here in Congress ignores the urgent need to act on the 9/11 Commission recommendations. Last week, Majority Leader TOM DELAY told reporters that he thought it was, and I quote, highly inappropriate to call for immediate passage of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. I guess the majority leader would prefer we continue to delay. It has been 3 years. How much longer would the majority leader like us to wait?

Mr. Speaker, Republicans also would like the American people to forget that they have been doing the work of America's corporate and special interests for the last 4 years to the detriment of the best interests of the middle class.

Senator KERRY and congressional Democrats will take our country in a new direction and put the middle class first. Despite what President Bush and congressional Republicans promise over the next few months, they will continue to put the narrow interests of the few ahead of the middle class. Let us just look at their record over the

last 4 years. Republicans have accomplished many of the goals corporate interests have set forth with no concern over how these goals impact middle class Americans.

The Republican mission has been accomplished for companies seeking tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas, but not for workers. We have lost more than one million jobs. This administration still says outsourcing American jobs is a good thing, and they still insist on giving companies tax breaks that ship American jobs overseas. But profits are record high at Halliburton. If only Bush and congressional Republicans fought half as hard for the middle class as they have for Halliburton's no-bid contracts, maybe middle class families would not be hurting so badly.

The Republican mission has been accomplished for drug companies but not for our seniors. Seniors are still splitting their pills in half because prescription drug prices have soared so high. The Republican mission has been accomplished for insurance companies but not for families struggling with high health care costs. While premiums skyrocket, insurance companies continue to rake in record profits.

The Republican mission has been accomplished for big oil companies, not for middle class families struggling with the record high cost of gas. Average families are paying \$580 more in gas prices while oil profits rise and the Saudi royal family profits. Bush has made America more dependent on foreign oil and failed to invest in alternative technologies and conservation.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at this record, why should Americans believe President Bush and congressional Republicans would change their emphasis away from the special interests to the middle class in the future? Republican policies have squeezed middle class families. While earnings for middle class families have fallen over the last 4 years, health care costs have increased by more than \$2,000, education

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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